



2017



UTAHFUTURES IMPACT EVALUATION

A formative evaluation of the program's efforts to support college and career readiness, informed decisions, personal fulfillment and statewide economic benefits.

UtahFutures.org





Thank you for joining us tonight. Please take a moment to provide feedback we can share with our funders.

After this event, how likely are you to...

Not Likely Likely Very Likely

...watch American Graduate Day on UEN-TV this Saturday?



...collaborate with a new partner you connected with tonight?



...share UtahFutures.org with a learner?



...talk with a young person or jobseeker about technical careers?



Comments:

I am a secretary in Stansbury High School and Utah Futures is the backbone of our Student/Parent meetings: Plan for College & Career Readiness. we SO appreciate all that you give us!



INTRODUCTION

The majority of K-12, college and adult UtahFutures users agree that the program makes them more successful in researching careers and identifying relevant training or coursework to achieve their aspirations.

UTAHFUTURES.ORG is playing an important role in the success of Utahns and the future prosperity of our state. The online web portal directly supports education planning and career exploration, helping residents plot their individual paths to and through education programs and fulfilling careers. Established with a limited set of tools in 2009, today's robust suite of resources is supporting over 170,000 users—and that number continues to grow each month.

Using established research proving the benefits of purposeful college and career planning, several state agencies collaborated to create UtahFutures, which matches people with promising careers using streamlined self-assessment tools and personalized career road maps. It also supports school counselors and career advisors as they work with clients to help them discover skills, abilities and interests that fit the work environments and economic factors unique to Utah.

Today, more and more Utahns are using UtahFutures to research careers, identify educational pathways toward their career goals, and locate jobs matched to their interests and abilities—ultimately increasing the chances of an educated, informed workforce in Utah. Recent changes in the program's management, dedicated efforts to publicize and train users across the state and the availability of additional resources have hastened unprecedented use. The following accomplishments have been achieved since the Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN) assumed oversight of the program in 2015:

- *There has been a 285% increase in the number of registered user accounts.*
- *The average number of page views increased by 129% over the same period during 2014-15.*
- *The typical visitor is spending approximately 25% more time on each visit, relative to average 2015 visit data.*

Those who have used the site describe the range of benefits they have received through this research-based program. For example:

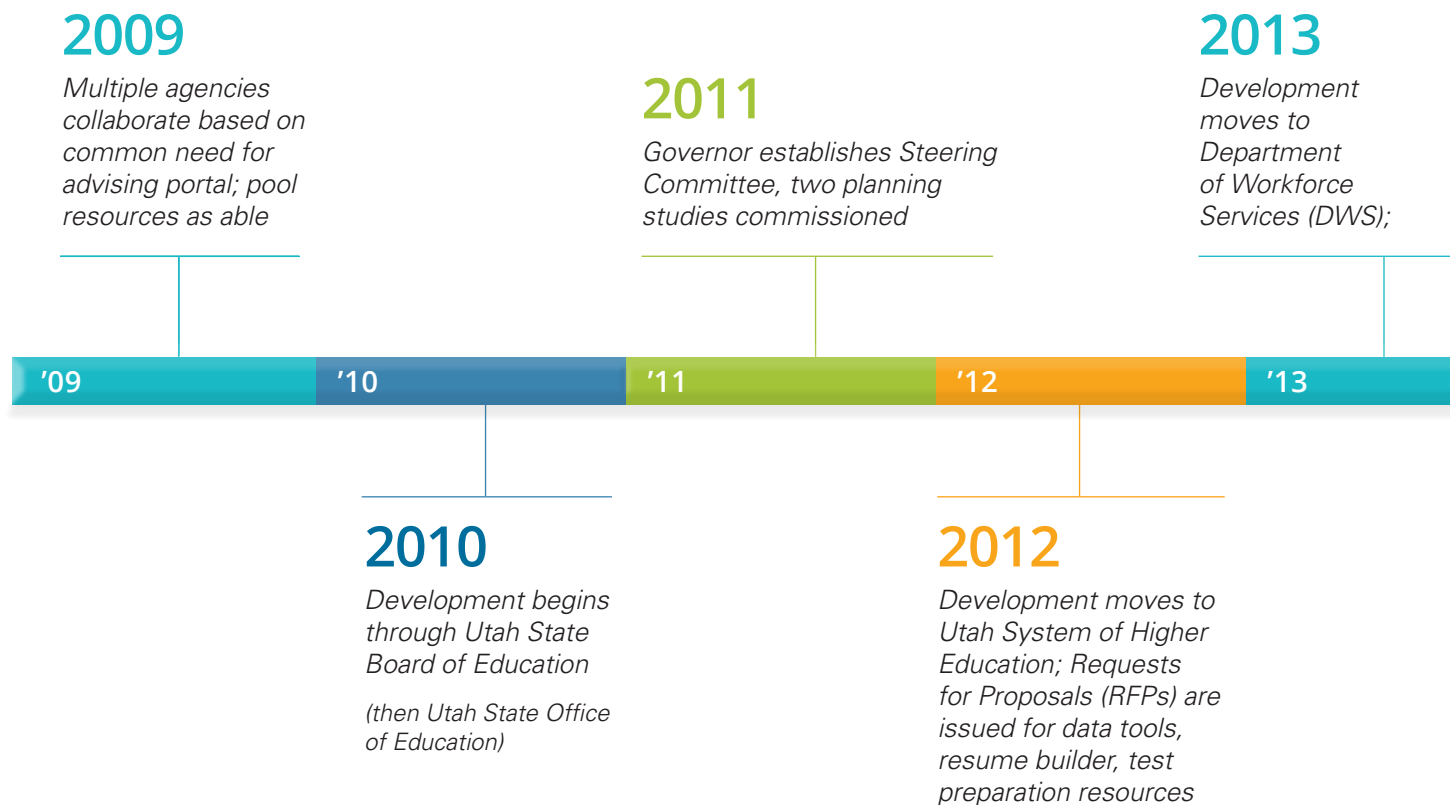
- *K-12 counselors and adult-serving advisors indicate that UtahFutures not only helps them better serve their clients, but also enables them to serve more clients.*
- *The majority of K-12, college and adult UtahFutures users agree that the program makes them more successful in researching careers and identifying relevant training or coursework to achieve their aspirations.*

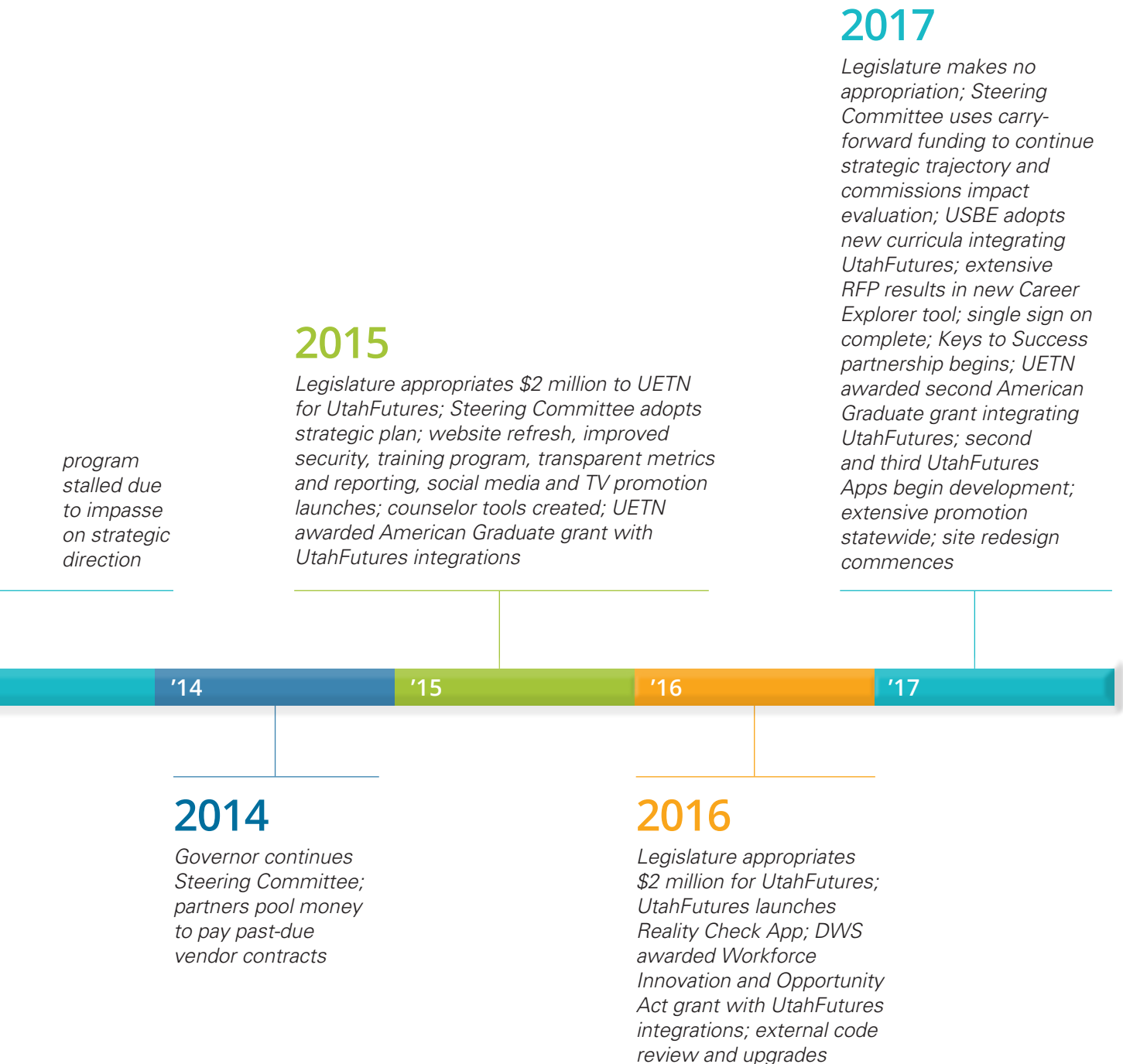
THIS EVALUATION REPORT

This report is the first formal evaluation of UtahFutures. It presents the short- and intermediate-term accomplishments achieved by residents using the UtahFutures platform, and the ultimate test of UtahFutures: its economic impact across the state. Early, yet promising, results suggest that primary users (students and job seekers), school counselors, and advisors find UtahFutures to be a useful tool for career guidance.

A BRIEF HISTORY

THE UTAHFUTURES PROGRAM traveled through a number of organizations before ultimately finding its current home at UETN in 2015.





A THEORY OF ACTION

TODAY'S UTAHFUTURES is the result of a multi-year, intentional planning and development process. It relies on a complement of research-based tools and resources that provide predictable career planning and selection advice.

How does the UtahFutures program change the way career planning happens, ultimately providing economic benefit for Utah and its residents?

The following theory of action highlights the logic behind UtahFutures, and the outcomes it is directly supporting across the state.

- 6 **UtahFutures contributes to increased economic prosperity for Utah and its residents.**
- 5 **UtahFutures increases the success of those who use it:** UtahFutures users and the school counselors and advisors with whom they work, experience success in their career planning and career-related decisions.
- 4 **UtahFutures is perceived as beneficial by the people who use it:** UtahFutures users and the school counselors and advisors with whom they work, report finding utility in the resource, and indicate increased knowledge and planning abilities.
- 3 **UtahFutures is used:** People across the state of Utah access, and sustain their use of UtahFutures—including K-12 and college students, and adults in career transitions.
- 2 **UtahFutures is disseminated:** UETN promotes and supports the use of UtahFutures across the state.
- 1 **UtahFutures is stable:** UtahFutures provides a reliable website with accurate data, programming, and best-in-class resources focused on college and career options.

The following sections describe each element in the UtahFutures Theory of Action, and provide evidence of the program's impact.



UTAHFUTURES IS STABLE

UTAHFUTURES IS a research-based, data-driven suite of resources designed to support informed decisions about college and career. Since its original online presence was established in 2009, UtahFutures has benefitted from continuous improvement and ongoing curation.

What does today's UtahFutures program look like?

Today, UtahFutures offers the following career-planning tools and features.

CAREER EXPLORATION	<i>Five assessments designed to match users with high-potential career choices using dynamic media and interactivity</i>
REALITY CHECK	<i>Helps users assess costs of living specific to career-related income</i>
DEGREE FINDER	<i>A searchable database of majors, minors, and technical programs</i>
DATA	<i>Timely data sets from state and federal sources such as the Department of Labor, Utah jobs database, and state and federal education programs help users make accurate comparisons</i>
TEST PREP	<i>A library of testing preparation materials and hundreds of e-books help prepare users for college admission and industry certification tests</i>
INTEREST PROFILER	<i>An assessment using John Holland's personality types (Holland code), which have predictive relationships to careers, college majors, career clusters and career pathways</i>
CAREER CLUSTER	<i>An assessment that matches users with career fields</i>
SCHOOL SEARCH	<i>A searchable database of colleges, universities, and technical schools, with Utah institutions prioritized to appear first in searches</i>
RESUME BUILDER	<i>An online tool that formats and creates a printable resume based on user-provided information</i>
UTAHFUTURES: SKILLS ONLINE	<i>A database of over 3,000 free and fee-based courses on a variety of subjects</i>
CONVERSATION CARDS APP	<i>An application that supports career-related discussions between adults and youth</i>
REALITY CHECK APP	<i>An app version of the Reality Check tool on UtahFutures</i>
UTAHFUTURES ONRAMP	<i>A companion website that contains UtahFutures training tools for school counselors and advisors</i>



PROFILE

GARY LACOCK

*Special Education
Counselor
Provo, Utah*

What happens when a student can't connect today's education with tomorrow's opportunities? Often, they experience "attendance issues and poor performance in school," according to Gary, a veteran educator of more than 20 years. Now a mentor for young adults reengaging with high school, Gary uses UtahFutures.org to help learners see what they want and need from a career and identify the steps to attaining their goals. Assessments such as the Interest Profiler and Reality Check are particularly helpful as he guides students toward connecting their dreams to reality. "We can look at the assessment together and I can say, 'What does this mean to you?' That allows for great, on-target conversations of where to go next."

PROFILE

TROY FERNLEY

*Middle School Teacher
Bluffdale, Utah*



When Troy, a middle school CTE teacher, asks a class of seventh graders what careers they want, almost all identify the same well-known occupations. Doctor. Lawyer. Professional athlete. Occupations they've heard about. Then Troy introduces them to UtahFutures, where the students discover a rich field of education and career prospects. Before they move on to high school, Troy's students have been exposed to many possibilities, talked with parents about their interests, and learned where to go for more information. "I've seen ninth graders in the computer lab using UtahFutures on their own," he says. "It's a great resource."

UTAHFUTURES IS DISSEMINATED

IF YOU BUILD IT, will they come? Getting the word out about UtahFutures and the resources it provides is an ongoing effort for UETN. Of the organizations that provided a home for UtahFutures over the years, UETN is best equipped to carry out this critical element of the program's implementation. Statewide public broadcasting reach, an established professional development structure, governance representing a broad constituent base, and UETN's unique role as a technology provider across the state make UETN the right home for UtahFutures.

Statewide public broadcasting reach, an established professional development structure, governance representing a broad constituent base, and UETN's unique role as a technology provider across the state make UETN the right home for UtahFutures.

How is UETN promoting the UtahFutures program to residents across the state?

UETN is currently engaged in disseminating UtahFutures through an intentionally diverse complement of strategies, with considerable reach.

UTAHFUTURES DISSEMINATION 2015-2017 BY THE NUMBERS

312	Hours of UtahFutures career education programs aired on KUEN
59	UtahFutures promotional spots aired on KUEN
949,000	Households in the KUEN viewing area
276,600	UtahFutures social media impressions
223	UtahFutures training sessions held statewide
4,931	School counselors and advisors trained by UtahFutures
7,000+	UtahFutures collateral pieces distributed during college application events
263	UtahFutures monthly newsletter subscribers

Since responsibility for UtahFutures transitioned to UETN, there has been a 285% increase in the number of registered user accounts.

GROWTH IN REGISTERED UTAHFUTURES USERS

(following UETN management of program)



What this means: Today, there are more than 3.8 registered users for every user who registered in January 2015.

This trend offers preliminary evidence that the UtahFutures dissemination efforts conducted by UETN are reaching the people of Utah. The next section more closely examines how these registered users make use of UtahFutures over time.



UTAHFUTURES IS USED

WITH THE AVAILABILITY of UtahFutures’ research-based tools and resources, and a growing awareness of its presence across the state, the best initial indicator of success is straightforward: do people use it?

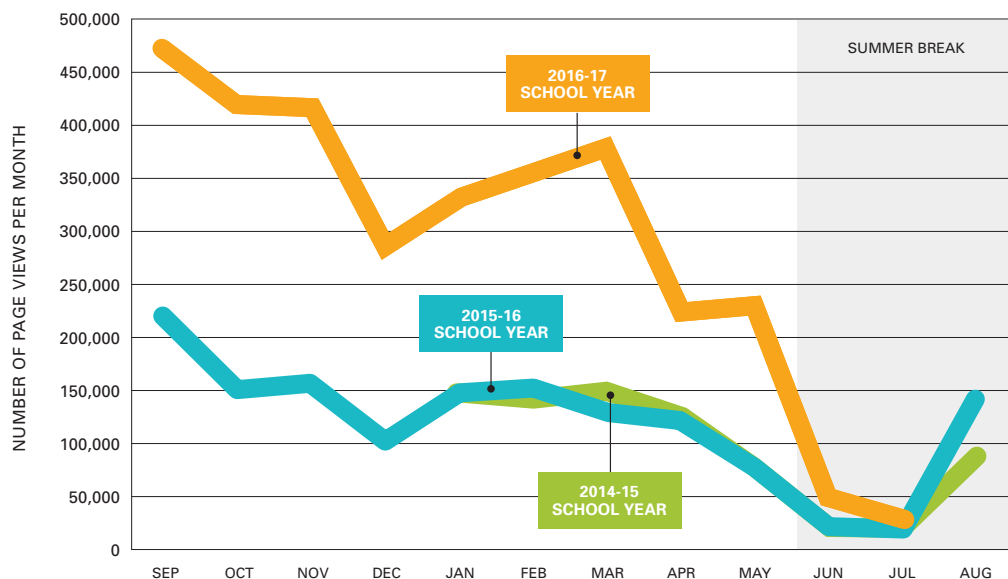
Do usage trends provide evidence of successful dissemination of the UtahFutures program across the state?

To develop a picture of use, we examined trends from the point in time when UETN assumed program management. Usage trends vary within each year, and largely parallel the school year. This reflects the considerable use of the program by schools and universities, and times when users are seeking education and employment opportunities. For example, usage predictably dips during winter and summer breaks.

Trends over the past three years show dramatically increasing usage figures (page views) for every month of the school year. In fact, between the 2014-15 and 2016-17 school year months, usage increased between 78% and 195%, depending on the months compared.

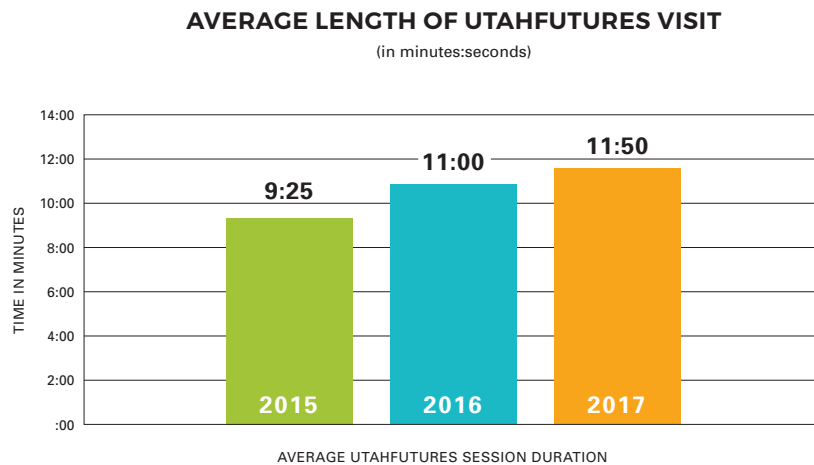
During the 2016-17 school year, the average number of page views increased by 129% over the same period during 2014-15.

UTAHFUTURES PAGE VIEWS—BY MONTH AND YEAR



UETN's efforts to enhance the resources UtahFutures provides have paid off. The average visit time has steadily increased over the past three years.

Today, the typical visitor spends approximately 25% more time on each visit, relative to those who used the site in 2015.



These figures illustrate that cross-state, sustained use of UtahFutures is not only occurring—but is increasing as a result of UETN's successful efforts to raise awareness through diverse dissemination strategies.



PROFILE

JOHN LYMAN

*Middle School
Counselor
Orem, Utah*

Each year, John meets with about 380 middle school students and their parents to discuss education and career pathways. One of the biggest challenges, as he sees it, is opening minds to options beyond pursuing a four-year degree right out of high school. “We’ve sold the idea of higher education really well. What we haven’t sold [as well] is getting a degree that matches the labor market needs. People just don’t know what they are,” he says. John relies on UtahFutures.org to help learners and parents research education and training choices, local prospects for advancement, and alignment with learners’ circumstances and interests. John says, “UtahFutures provides most of what they need—information on different careers, job outlook and skills. It’s a great website. There’s a lot of great information.”



EVIDENCE OF UTAHFUTURES UTILITY:

UTAHFUTURES IS PERCEIVED AS BENEFICIAL BY PEOPLE WHO USE IT

WITH MORE UTAHNS using UtahFutures, the conversation now turns to whether the platform delivers on its promise.

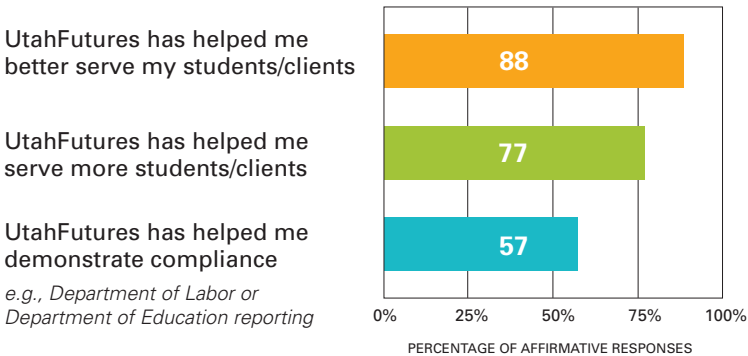
Do UtahFutures users find the program useful to their career-related planning and decision-making?

We created two surveys to investigate the UtahFutures user experience. One survey was distributed to UtahFutures users including K-12 and university students, and adults in career transitions. Another survey was distributed to school counselors and advisors who use the program in their daily work with students and clients. Over 600 individuals representing 26 of 29 Utah counties provided the data for this report.

Counselors indicated that UtahFutures is improving their effectiveness

The majority of K-12 counselors and adult-serving advisors indicated that UtahFutures not only helps them better serve their clients, but also enables them to serve more clients. The resource also proved to be a helpful way to demonstrate compliance to various agencies, or as required by funded projects.

UTILITY OF UTAHFUTURES FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND CAREER ADVISORS

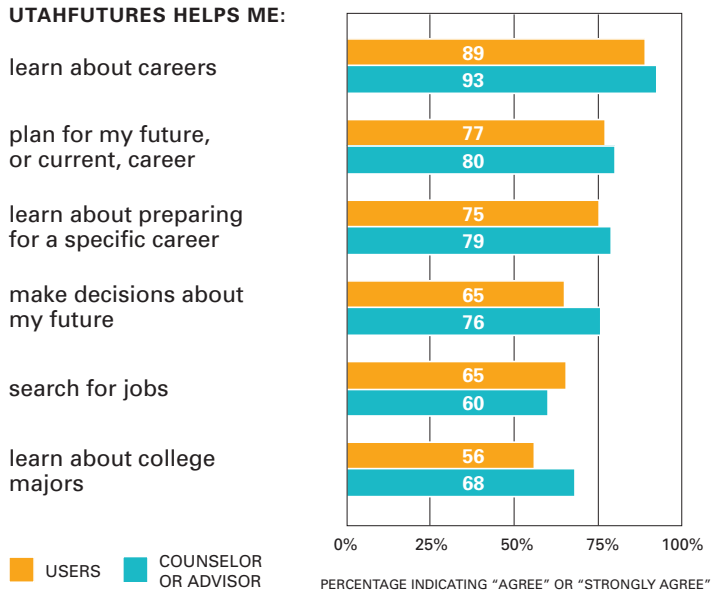


Additionally, 53% of the respondents stated that UtahFutures has effectively replaced other individual planning tools used in the past.

UtahFutures provides much-needed online counseling with tangible financial value. In 2017, UtahFutures users experienced a total of 111,760 hours of one-on-one career counseling. At average Utah salaries, that equates to \$3,541,928 million in counseling services provided during 2017 and over \$9.2 million since 2015.

UTILITY OF UTAHFUTURES FOR K-12, COLLEGE AND ADULT USERS

UTAHFUTURES HELPS ME:



Shared beliefs about UtahFutures utility: Supporting career and education planning

UtahFutures users overwhelmingly perceive the program as effective for learning about careers, and planning for the future. Additionally, over two-thirds of respondents indicated using UtahFutures to learn about how to prepare for a specific career.

School counselor and advisor respondents confirmed UtahFuture's efficacy through largely similar ratings to those offered by users.

These trends proved consistent, whether the responding UtahFutures user was a middle or high school student, college student or adult.

PROFILE

KAYLENE WHICKER
Employment Counselor
Ogden, Utah



"It's a lot of fun helping people get back to work," says Kaylene, an Ogden-area Department of Workforce Services employment counselor who mentors as many as 40 adults each year. The goal is to help them overcome barriers to employment, such as lacking a plan that links interests with opportunities. Kaylene breaks down this barrier with UtahFutures.org. Recently, a jobseeker she counseled was looking for work in a field she wasn't excited about. After completing the Interest Profiler on UtahFutures.org, the jobseeker realized she loves to work with her hands. She then delved further into the site, learned more about viable careers that matched her interests, and is now a paid apprentice with an HVAC company on her way to becoming a certified technician. Kaylene says, "UtahFutures is a really great resource to help develop that relationship with customers and be a piece of their success."



EVIDENCE OF USER SUCCESS:

UTAHFUTURES INCREASES THE SUCCESS OF THOSE WHO USE IT

WITH USE AND UTILITY established, the program evaluation turned to how UtahFutures delivers results.

Do UtahFutures users experience success in their career-related planning and decision-making?

Survey instruments investigated the various college and career-planning successes described by UtahFutures users and school counselors and advisors. In particular, we closely examined aspects of career planning that are research-proven to impact an individual’s future success.

A foundation for future career satisfaction

Responses from middle and high school users reflect growing confidence regarding career decision-making. A full 79% indicated feeling more successful with career research through UtahFutures.

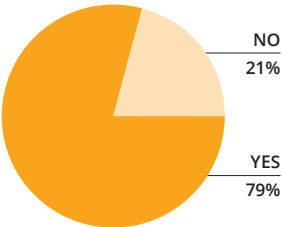
Research by Keller (2004) demonstrates that young adults who feel a level of competence with career decision-making tend to make more satisfying career choices later in life.

A catalyst for dialog about the future

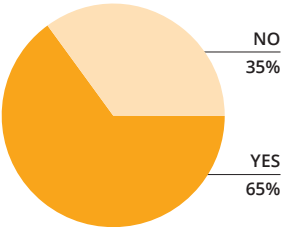
UtahFutures proved successful in prompting career dialog for 65% of users who responded to the survey. Additionally, more than half of users had shared UtahFutures reports with a family member, friend or school counselor/advisor.

Bregman and Killen (1999) observed that young people valued parental influence and guidance in the area of career choice and vocational development. Bardick, Bernes, Magunsson & Witko (2004) found that middle school students rely first upon their parents and friends, and then on teachers or counselors for career planning.

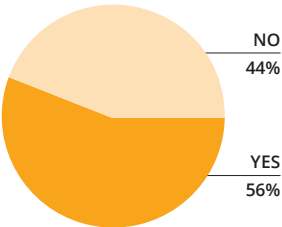
I have been more successful researching careers as a result of UtahFutures



I have discussed what I’ve learned from UtahFutures with a friend, parent, colleague and/or counselor



I have shared reports from UtahFutures with a friend, parent, colleague and/or counselor



Success in making informed decisions

After using UtahFutures, respondents perceived themselves as more successful in researching careers. School counselor and advisor respondents concurred.

In addition, 54% had determined a training plan through UtahFutures recommendations. User responses continued to align with those from school counselors and advisors (based on their observation of clients).

In addition to data reported here, 10% of respondents indicated having found a job as a result of UtahFutures recommendations.

SUCCESS REALIZED THROUGH UTAHFUTURES FOR K-12, COLLEGE AND ADULT USERS AND CAREER COUNSELOR/ADVISORS

AS A RESULT OF USING UTAHFUTURES:

More successful researching careers

Identified training or coursework

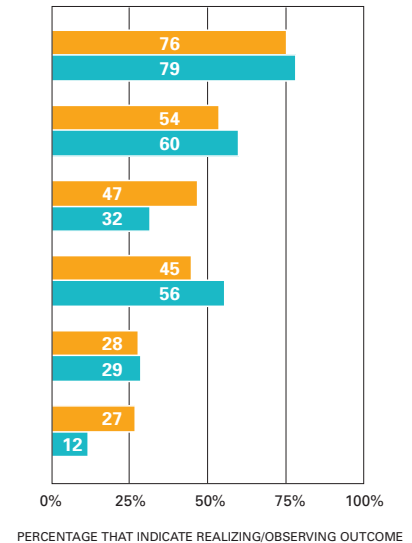
More successful searching for a job

Selected career objective

Participated in training or coursework

More successful interviewing for a job

USERS COUNSELOR OR ADVISOR



PROFILE

MIA STACK

High School Student
Salt Lake City, Utah

Last summer, if Mia talked about future careers, chances were her dad started the conversation. “I assumed I’d just figure it out later in college,” the high school junior says. Then Mia’s Career and Technical Education teacher had her class delve into UtahFutures.org. After analyzing her interests, she investigated medical career pathways, discovering possibilities she never considered before. Mia says, “Seeing the salaries and how much education a person needs was really interesting. UtahFutures lets you see everything you want to know about a career so simply and easily. It’s all right there.” Since then, Mia has revisited the site several times on her own to learn more about what she might want to study in college. Now when Mia and her dad discuss careers, she’s the one initiating the conversation: “After UtahFutures, I definitely got excited about my future and seeing what I could do.”



STATEWIDE IMPACT:

UTAHFUTURES CONTRIBUTES TO
INCREASED ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR
UTAH AND ITS RESIDENTS

THIS FORMATIVE EVALUATION of accomplishments and impact achieved through UtahFutures has provided promising evidence of the program’s value to Utah residents—but what about the value to the state’s economy?

How does UtahFutures impact the prosperity of Utah through its direct support of the career planning and development of the state’s residents?

Answering this question will take time and a focused research effort designed to quantify how being better prepared for and carefully matched to a chosen career impacts the state economy. In the meantime, the state’s economists have established the following facts related to the college and career decisions of Utah’s current and future workforce.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION	POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
<p>The following figures (Utah System of Higher Education, 2017) highlight the role Technical Education plays in supporting the livelihood of Utahns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students credentialed by USHE in a technical area of study have higher median year annual wages than those who completed non-Career and Technical Education (CTE) credentials at the same level—with a \$2,400 difference for certificates and a \$6,994 difference for associate degrees.• The median fifth-year annual wage for those earning CTE certificates is \$39,807, and \$55,432 for those earning associate degrees. Median fifth-year annual wages for non-CTE certificates and non-CTE associate degrees are \$37,396 and \$48,438, respectively.• Recent USHE CTE graduates experience an overall placement rate of 84%.	<p>Research by the Utah System of Higher Education (2014) projected that if 66% of Utah’s adult population earned a post-secondary degree or certificate by 2020, the state would realize the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$14.4 billion added to the Utah economy over 30 years in wages, with an annual rate of \$400 million• \$1.4 billion in additional tax revenue for the state of Utah over 30 years• An estimated 42,057 Utahns escaping the cycle of intergenerational poverty• \$18 million per year in reduced expenditures for the SNAP/Food Stamp program• A reduction in the number of incarcerations• Increased parent-child interactions, resulting in an improvement in K-12 child success rates

When these projections are extrapolated to the current base of 148,000 registered UtahFutures users, the economic benefits become evident:

If the 148,000 UtahFutures users continued beyond high school to earn:	Total added income to Utah's economy annually <i>(beyond average annual earnings with high school diploma)</i>	Total added income to Utah's economy over 40-year career <i>(wage held constant)</i>	Additional tax contribution to the state over 40-year career (14.14%)
ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE	\$696.2 Million	\$27.8 Billion	\$3.9 Billion
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	\$2.3 Billion	\$92.3 Billion	\$13.1 Billion

BACHELOR DEGREE WAGE DATA: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for Utah
ASSOCIATE DEGREE WAGE DATA: Utah System of Higher Education, 2017 Report on Technical Education
TAX CALCULATION: Rate estimates from the Utah Taxpayers Association

Early data suggests that UtahFutures is already benefiting people across the state of Utah: these figures demonstrate the benefits—potential and realized—by resident and state alike through planned, intentional career preparation. More robust and longitudinal data may quantify the program's impact over time, including its contribution to the state economy.



PROFILE

LUANN LEAVITT

Principal

JAYNALENE STARK

Counselor

West Jordan, Utah

A bridge from secondary school to beyond is essential for adults who are returning to finish high school diplomas. "Adult students enroll an average of seven times before completion. They've got families, jobs, kids. They come and go," says Luann, principal of a Utah high school for adults. Her colleague Jayna uses UtahFutures.org with their students as a bridge to career readiness. With one URL and a suite of tools, UtahFutures saves Jayna time, which she then invests in answering each individual's questions. "Their experience in school has been "I can just work, I don't need my diploma," Jayna says. "They see they can get jobs now and work toward a future career. UtahFutures is a guide that they can go back to any time to make new goals."

CONCLUSION

UTAHFUTURES IS not only responding to Governor Herbert’s call to meet the career- and college-related planning needs of the state’s residents, but it is responding with Utah-specific programs, careers, and opportunities. Unlike other national resources, UtahFutures has been carefully designed to prioritize Utah programs and jobs, and be responsive to the current and future economic needs of Utah and its workforce.

UtahFutures is directly supporting the success of people throughout the state by helping them match their interests to well-suited careers, plan courses of study, and find financial support. This progression ultimately leads to economic benefits for resident and state alike. Survey data has demonstrated the following facts:

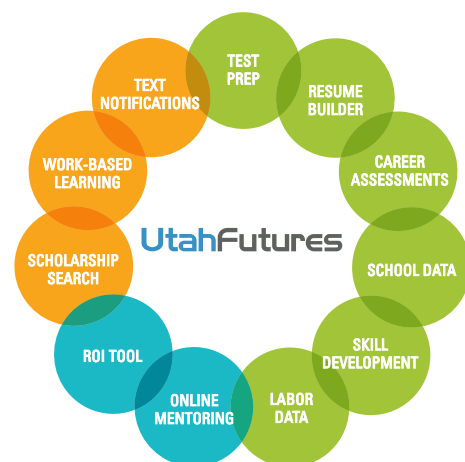
- *School counselors and advisors are replacing more general career-related resources with the state-specific support UtahFutures provides.*
- *Users—whether middle and high school, college or adult age—find value in the career planning and recommendations provided by UtahFutures.*
- *Personalized planning supports, and the results this process provides, results in meaningful discussions among UtahFutures users, their parents, families, counselors/advisors and peers.*
- *Users acknowledge that they are making better decisions, and taking action from more informed, data-driven foundations.*

Since UETN assumed ownership of UtahFutures, the number of registered users and pages viewed in the online resource library has grown dramatically. With continued support from the state, the set of resources is expanding, with a career-focused Return on Investment tool and online mentoring currently being implemented. These and future enhancements, each accomplished with the state’s needs and priorities in mind, will contribute to the increased prosperity of Utah’s residents and the state as a whole.

UTAHFUTURES KEY RESOURCES

Complete, In Process and Future

UtahFutures development process includes a suite of research-based tools, which are responsive to the economic needs of Utah. Green are complete, blue are in progress, and orange are slated for future development stages.



Survey Methodology

Survey results reported in this document were derived from a formative evaluation conducted in fall 2017. The survey component targeted primary users, including middle and high school students, college students, and adults. K-12 school counselors, college advisors and career advisors also responded to a survey targeted to the school counselor and advisor users. The limited survey explored UtahFutures' usability and utility, as perceived by each target audience. The primary reasons each audience accesses the resource were identified, and the potential outcomes realized with UtahFutures' support were assessed. A total of 323 primary users responded to the User Experience Survey, which included data from 26 of 29 Utah counties. An additional 309 school counselors and advisors responded to the Advisor Survey, which included responses from individuals in 17 of 29 Utah counties. It must be noted that this survey effort employed opportunity sampling. Thus, the generalizability of findings to all program users is unknown.

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UtahFutures.org

UtahFutureOnRamp.org

A Service of Utah Education
and Telehealth Network



Utah Education and Telehealth Network

UtahFutures Founding Partners

